

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS
MINUTES OF MEETING (CVRS)
SEPTEMBER 21, 2004

The Rhode Island State Board of Elections met at 9:30 a.m. A quorum included Chair Roger Begin, Vice Chair Thomas Iannitti, Commissioners Judith Bailey, John Daluz, Frank Rego and Ray Xavier. Acting Executive Director George Bowen and Counselor Raymond Marcaccio were in attendance, also.

The purpose of the meeting was to address the impact of the Central Voter Registry System (CVRS) implementation on the September 14, 2004 primaries and review the Board decision of September 1, 2004 to permit thirty-four (34) local boards of canvassers to change voting lists prior to the November 2, 2004 general election.

The Board commenced the meeting by allowing Joseph DiStefano, Counselor for the Office of the Secretary of State, to make a brief statement. He offered that five (5) communities completed the September 14, 2004 primaries with the aid of the Central Voter Registration System (CVRS) and that three communities are ready and willing to implement the CVRS for the general election. He offered that (contrary to its request made to the BOE on September 1, 2004) the Secretary of State will not force any community to come on board or change voting lists by November 2, 2004, if they are not comfortable with the new system. Those communities wishing to wait

until after the election will be allowed to do so.

At this time, Chair Begin thanked Mr. DiStefano for his statement and asked for further comments, suggestions and recommendations from the canvassing authorities and members of the public. The Board heard mixed reviews with regard to the implementation of the CVRS on September 14th and the going forward with the implementation of the new voting lists in the other communities on November 2nd. Comments were made by representatives from several local boards including Johnston, Central Falls, Cranston, West Warwick, Scituate, North Providence, Coventry and East Providence.

When the Board asked for recommendations/ways on how to improve election-day voting, several members of the public suggested the following:

- more hands-on-training for poll workers and local boards,**
- younger poll workers,**
- bi-partisan pairs of supervisors who would handle only provisional ballots at the polls;**
- the use of state inspectors on election day,**
- newer equipment for the local boards paid for with HAVA monies;**
- and**
- more training for poll workers with regard to the casting of a provisional ballot.**

Chair Begin asked for comments and suggestions from the Board.

Vice Chair Iannitti stressed the need for the Members to visit the communities to hear the voters' concerns. Commissioner Rego suggested holding meetings, like this, at least three (3) times a year.

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Counselor DiStefano asked to address the Board. He offered that there are HAVA monies available to the Board of Elections for the purpose of getting quality polling officials and equipment. He urged the Board to make use of the funds before long, as they may not be available down the road.

Before taking leave of the matter, Vice Chair Iannitti asked if the Board could have a definite proposal from the SOS on the use of HAVA monies. With this, Mr. DiStefano suggested that the BOE and SOS hold a joint session where the two agencies could best determine how to use (HAVA) funds to improve the administration of the polls. Attorney DiStefano suggested the monies might be used to train state inspectors for election day. In closing, Mr. DiStefano added that he and members of the executive staff of the Office of the Secretary of State were available to assist the Board.

At this time, Chair Begin asked Mr. Bowen to share the Board's ideas

concerning provisional ballots for the November 2nd election with members of the audience. Mr. Bowen offered that with the approval of \$90, 000. in HAVA monies by SOS, the Board proposes to design a color-coded ballot with a separate header code that would make the ballot rejected if a voter attempted to insert the (provisional) ballot into the scanner on November 2nd. (Note: The BOE anticipates submitting a request for the HAVA funds in the very near future.)

At 10:45 a.m. and with no further discussion on the matter, Chair Begin thanked the members of the audience for their attendance and declared a recess. (Note: The Board took a short break before returning to commence any hearings requested with regard to the City of Cranston.

ATTEST: Frances A. Keating
Coordinator, Special Projects